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SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: SOMALIA - SCENESETTER FOR A/S KIMMITT'S PARTICIPATION IN UN PIRACY CONFERENCE

¶1. (SBU) Post welcomes your visit to Nairobi for the UN/Government of Kenya Conference on Piracy. The conference is an opportunity to help shape the international community's response to Somali piracy. The conference conclusions may also feed Washington deliberations in advance of the planned New York ministerial on piracy.

¶2. (U) Over 150 delegates from morethan 50 invited countries and international organizations will gather for a day of technical talks, preceding a ministerial on day two, in which you'll participate. Ambassador Michael Ranneberger and Special Envoy for Somalia John Yates will accompanyyou. After opening remarks by the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, and addresses by Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki and Somali President Abdullahi Yusuf, the plenary will discuss international, regional, and Somali-based responses to piracy. The day ends with issuance of a communique.

¶3. (SBU) If you agree, from among the participating delegates we have scheduled meetings for you with the UK's Lord Allen West, Minister for Home Affairs and Security, and French Special Envoy for Piracy Mrs. Chantal Poirot. At Ambassador Ranneberger's suggestion Puntland President Mohammed Muse Hersi has also agreed to meet with you, should you choose.

¶4. (SBU) This year to date, Somali pirates, mostly from the northern semi-autonomous Puntland region, have launched 105 attacks, resulting in 64 successful ship hijackings. Currently 13 ships are being held, including the weapons ship M/V Faina and the ultra large crude carrier M/V Sirius Star. Shipping and insurance companies have reportedly paid between \$30 and \$50 million in ransoms to Somalia pirates this year. Ransom money has probably made its way into local politicians' pockets, as well as the regions' economies. Ransoms are reportedly driving a new market for luxury goods in Puntland, and may be behind a purported rise in the price of real estate as far away as Mombasa, Kenya.

¶5. (SBU) As delegations gather here in Nairobi and later in New York, we urge Washington to build into its longer-term piracy strategy comprehensive economic- and politically-based land solutions, as well as sea-based ones. The up-tick in piracy is the result of a collapse of Somalia's economic, political and security situation. Sea-based solutions are necessary in the short and medium term. But without a concerted effort to politically solve Somali piracy on land, sea-based solutions will require potentially expensive, dangerous, open-ended commitments by shippers and navies to deter pirate attacks over thousands of square miles of ocean. Sea-based solutions risk distracting international navies from their more important counter-terror and counter-proliferation missions.

¶6. (SBU) A land solution to Somali piracy would involve mustering increased international support for a peace keeping operation for Somalia, as well as finding financial support (from Arab states, for example) for joint TFG and moderate Islamist security forces projected to stand up in the first half of 2009. Likewise, continued pressure on Puntland, where pirate networks are based, will reinforce our message of transparent government and cooperation on our counterterrorism and anti-piracy initiatives. In Washington's piracy response planning, and in light of renewed international attention on Somalia, we urge blending land solutions to Somalia's political woes with sea solutions to piracy.

RANNEBERGER